

From: Thomas Hoffman
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/7/01 11:04am
Subject: I can't believe you are going to let them get away with it

Department of Justice,

I applaud the fact that Microsoft was found to be an illegal monopoly. They've been using their market position to drive smaller competitors out of business for years. Despite the avalanche of negative evidence clearly demonstrating their predatory business practices, it appears they are now going to "get away with it". Recently the settlement has turned toward the soft side and no longer represents the type of action that fits the situation. That is a slap in the face to not only the Justice Department and Judicial system at large, but to the American people who take pride in diversity and freedom of choice. I've used Microsoft's products in the past and truthfully, I've been very unhappy with them. What concerns me is that I had no choice but to continue spending money on and using their poor quality products despite the fact I was desperate to use something....anything else. If you're in the business world, you have to use Microsoft's file formats and because of their proprietary nature, no one else has a chance to compete. Reverse engineering is only getting the development community so far. So what choice do you have to continue to pour money into Microsoft's coffers. As far as the settlement, it doesn't approach what the development community was hoping for. In fact, it's a weak slap on the wrist that should embarrass the Justice Department. If you are going to tell Microsoft to make their desktop completely customizable by third parties, by God stick to your guns. Don't agree to let them put even a single icon on the desktop if intermediate parties choose to exclude them. Make them release their proprietary monopolistic Microsoft Office file formats so parties interested in producing competing desktop productivity applications can at least have a chance at compatibility with the vast majority of the market. Take steps to assure that Microsoft cannot leverage their enormous market share to continually put competitors out of business with unfair pricing, embrace and extend, and other monopolistic business practices. The development and business community is watching developments very closely. The Department of Justice cannot afford to drop the ball on a case that affects the lives, choices and freedoms of so many American people and people in the world at large. Don't let us down.

Regards,
Thomas Hoffman
American begging for choice